

ERIN BICKNESE: Hi, there. My name is Erin Bicknese. I live here in Knoxville. Thanks so much for taking this time and for opening this up to public comment. I think it is really important that this is a conversation we all have and that all of our voices are included. So, I appreciate that. I just wanted to say that I would like to urge the BLM to end the coal leasing on public lands. Digging and burning coal has many negative impacts on our communities and high costs, especially when you consider everything that is involved, public health, our air and water, global climate change. Also, the coal royalty rates are absurdly low, and it's wrong to give away something that belongs to all of us. It's not going to benefit us economically, but it is going to cause suffering and high costs to all of us. It is time to transition to a clean energy economy to protect our future, our lands, our water, our children. It is time to figure out now how to insure a clean energy future and economic transition in the places where coal is mined and across our country. I would also like to ask BLM to review the bonding regulations and eliminate the use of self-bonding by coal companies. When these companies go bankrupt, which they do, they are leaving us, the American people, to pay for the damage. If coal is going to make money for citizens, then coal communities wouldn't be some of the poorest in our country, which we have already heard about. This makes money for just a few, and it leaves the rest of us in a bad position. So, I really appreciate you considering changing this program and making sure that what belongs to all of us stays for all of us and is not ruined and doesn't impact all of us negatively. Thank you.